

**HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT**



**ROBERT BARRON BUILDING**  
720 YONGE STREET, TORONTO

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services  
City Planning Division  
City of Toronto

March 2015

## 1. DESCRIPTION



Above: principal (east) elevation of the Robert Barron Building, showing the 1889 portion (right) and the complementary 1902 extension (left); cover: east elevation on Yonge Street (left) and north wall on Charles Street West (right) (Heritage Preservation Services, March 2015)

| 720 Yonge Street: Robert Barron Building |   |
|--|---|
| ADDRESS                                  | 720 Yonge Street (southwest corner of Charles Street West) <sup>1</sup>                 |
| WARD                                     | Ward 27 (Toronto Centre-Rosedale)   |
| LEGAL DESCRIPTION                        | Plan D3, Lot 2  |
| NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY                  | Yonge Street  |
| HISTORICAL NAME                          | Robert Barron Building  |
| CONSTRUCTION DATE                        | 1889  |
| ORIGINAL OWNER                           | Robert Barron, grocer   |
| ORIGINAL USE                             | Commercial  |
| CURRENT USE*                             | Commercial<br>* This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law |
| ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER               | G. W. Gouinlock, architect  |
| DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS            | Brick cladding with brick, stone and wood trim  |
| ARCHITECTURAL STYLE                      | See Section 2   |
| ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS                    | 1902, south extension: see Section 2  |
| CRITERIA                                 | Design/Physical, Historical/Associative & Contextual                                    |
| HERITAGE STATUS                          | Listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register                                       |
| RECORDER                                 | Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson  |
| REPORT DATE                              | March 2015  |

<sup>1</sup> The property also has convenience addresses at 722-728 Yonge Street and 3 Charles Street West. It was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 1974 under the address of 728 Yonge Street

## 2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 720 Yonge Street (specifically the portions with the convenience addresses of 726 and 728 Yonge) and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in Section 4 (Summary).

### i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

| Key Date  | Historical Event   |
|-----------|--|
| 1797      | James McCauley is granted the patent for Park Lot 9  |
| 1799      | In a land exchange with McCauley, John Elmsley receives the north half of Park Lot 9   |
| 1859      | Elmsley's heirs register Plan D3, subdividing part of the Cloverhill Estate <sup>2</sup>   |
| 1883      | Elmsley's grandson, Remigius sells Lots 1-4 in Plan D3; the next year, the allotment is acquired by Thomas Rowland, who owns expanses of land along Yonge Street |
| 1884      | Goad's Atlas illustrates the vacant site   |
| 1888 June | Robert Barron purchases land in Plan D3 from Rowland, with a 25-foot-frontage along Yonge Street   |
| 1888 Nov  | Barron is issued a building permit for a "3-storey brick store" on the southwest corner of Yonge and Czar Streets (Czar is present-day Charles Street West)      |
| 1888      | The City Directory for 1889 (with information compiled the previous year) records "unfinished buildings" on the subject property                                 |
| 1889 May  | Barron's new store is profiled in <u>The Canadian Grocer</u> , including an illustration of the building designed by architect G. W. Gouinlock                   |
| 1889 Sept | In the assessment rolls, Barron's building and its detached stable are valued at \$7000  |
| 1890      | Goad's Atlas illustrates the Robert Barron Building, which extends one bay on Yonge Street   |
| 1893 Oct  | Barron purchases additional land on Yonge Street, directly south of his store (he acquires other adjoining parcels in 1894, 1895, 1902 and 1906 <sup>3</sup> )   |
| 1901 Dec  | Barron receives a building permit for "alterations and additions" to his store by architects Gouinlock and Baker   |
| 1902 July | The tax assessment roll records Barron's fish store at 726 Yonge, with the grocery store remaining at 728 Yonge  |
| 1907 June | Barron transfers his properties to R. Barron Limited   |
| 1911      | The company commissions a new enlarged stable at 81 St. Nicholas Street, southwest of the Yonge Street store and designed by G. W. Gouinlock                     |
| 1912 Mar  | Robert Barron dies, but the business is continued by family members, including his son, George who acquires additional land in the block                         |
| 1912      | The update to Goad's Atlas shows the southward and westward extensions of Barron's building (as well as the new detached stable on St. Nicholas Street)          |

<sup>2</sup> The first transactions on the subject property did not take place until the 1870s according to land records

<sup>3</sup> Prior to World War I, the single-storey buildings at 720 and 722 Yonge were in place to the south on land Barron had purchased in 1907 under the name "Robins Limited"

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 1922       | George W. King Associates, architects remodels Barron's buildings, including a new entrance to the upper stories and interior connections between the units             |
| 1930 May   | Architects Craig and Madill prepare specifications for a rear (west) addition for R. Barron Limited, which is in place the following year according to archival records |
| 1947 Oct   | Carl E. Cole purchases Barron's property (Carl and his brother Jack opened a second-hand book store near Bloor Street West and Spadina Avenue 12 years earlier)         |
| 1952       | Architect E. I. Richmond alters and extends the complex for C. Cole and Company   |
| 1954       | Cole transfers the Yonge Street property to Cole Buildings Limited  |
| 1974 March | The property is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) as 728 Yonge Street                                 |
| 1995-1996  | Shoppers Drug Mart opens an outlet at 720 Yonge Street  |

## ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The property at 720 Yonge Street (specifically the portions with the convenience addresses of 726 and 728 Yonge) is found on the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Charles Street West. Located on former Park Lot 9 as it was subdivided under Plan D3, the site contains a three-storey commercial building that was completed in two stages in 1889 and 1902.

### Yonge Street

Following the founding of the Town of York (Toronto) in 1793, the land north of the town site between present-day Queen and Bloor Streets was parcelled into 100-acre "park lots" that were awarded to associates of the provincial government as the location of country estates (Image 2). Yonge Street, the military road surveyed in 1796, formed the east boundary of Park Lot 9, which was granted to James McCauley, a British army surgeon in 1797 (Image 2). McCauley and John Elmsley, Chief Justice of Upper Canada and the owner of adjoining Park Lot 10 to the west, organized a land exchange whereby Elmsley received the north halves of the lots. Elmsley's heir, Captain John Elmsley (1801-63) built his first country house named "Clover Hill" on the tract. Following the younger Elmsley's marriage and conversion to Roman Catholicism, he began subdividing his park lots, donating parts of the tract to St. Michael's College (later affiliated with the University of Toronto) while laying out the first residential subdivisions.<sup>4</sup> Elmsley began selling the section of Park Lot 9 adjoining Yonge Street as early as 1819, a process that was continued by his heirs and executors throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Images 3 and 5).

The development of Elmsley's lands on the west side of Yonge Street was delayed by the condition of the thoroughfare, which remained impassible south of Bloor Street well into the 1800s. However, by the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Toronto's population more

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<sup>4</sup> The Elmsley family's initial development of Park Lots 9 and 10 is covered by Lumsden in The Estates of Old Toronto (1997), while extensive biographies of Chief Justice Elmsley and Captain Elmsley are available in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography online

than tripled, the opening of the first department stores near the intersection of Yonge and Queen resulted in the rebranding of Yonge Street as the city's "main street." Goad's Atlases illustrated the filling in of Yonge Street north to Bloor Street with two- and three-storey commercial blocks, including the Robert Barron Building at present-day 720 Yonge Street (Images 6-10).

### Robert Barron Building

The building at 720 Yonge Street was commissioned by Scottish-born merchant, Robert G. Barron (1841-1912). In 1882, a decade after his arrival in Toronto, Barron opened a grocery and provisions business on Yonge Street.<sup>5</sup> A glowing biographical sketch in 1888 described Barron as "an example of the shrewd businessmen that Scotland produces...and received in his native country the training that has now brought him to be one of the foremost men of this district."<sup>6</sup> The next year, Barron was listed as the Vice-President of the Toronto Retail Grocers' Association.

In June 1888, Barron purchased land on the west side of Yonge Street that was part of the subdivision of Elmsley's Cloverhill estate. This acquisition coincided with the extension of Czar Street (present-day Charles Street West) eastward to Yonge Street, leaving Barron with a sought-after corner lot. In November 1888, he received a building permit for a three-storey brick store that was described as "unfinished" in January 1889 (Image 12).<sup>7</sup> Goad's Atlas for 1890 outlined the narrow building, along with the detached stable to the rear (west) with access to Czar Street (Image 8). Barron's new grocery store was profiled and illustrated in the May 1, 1889 issue of The Canadian Grocer (Image 13). As advertised in periodicals and newspapers during the late Victorian era, Robert Barron operated a 'high end' grocery and provisions business, featuring imported foods and liquor (Image 14).

In the 1890s, Barron acquired the adjoining land to the south and west, including the parcel where the complementary south extension to his store was completed in 1902 (Image 16). This expansion (and a new west wing that absorbed the original stable) was partially depicted in a photograph dating to circa 1908 and included on the update to Goad's Atlas in 1912 (Image 17). While Barron died during the latter year, the business was continued by his family under the name R. Barron Limited.<sup>8</sup> Single-storey buildings were constructed on Yonge Street directly south of the store and occupied by various tenants, and a neighbouring stable complex was built on St. Nicholas Street (1912). R. Barron Limited retained the property at 720 Yonge Street until 1947, representing nearly 60 years of continuous ownership.

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<sup>5</sup> According to the City Directory of 1890 (with information dating to 1889), Barron was located at 657 Yonge on the southeast corner of Charles Street East, opposite the subject property

<sup>6</sup> Bixby, 132

<sup>7</sup> City Directory 1889 (with information compiled the previous year)

<sup>8</sup> Barron's obituary notes that he resided at 3 Charles Street West, evidently 'over the shop' as typical during the era

The property at 720 Yonge Street was acquired by Carl E. Cole, co-founder with his brother, Jack Cole of Coles Books.<sup>9</sup> The pair opened their first book store named the Book Exchange near Bloor Street West and Spadina Avenue in the mid 1930s where they specialized in the sale of second-hand books to university students. While located at the Robert Barron Building, the Cole brothers published the first edition of “Coles Notes” in 1948. Targeted at secondary school students and comprising over 120 titles, Coles Notes provided quick reference guides to a range of subjects from literature and languages to mathematics and science, with the primary focus on English novels. Coles Books expanded throughout Toronto and beyond as a major retail chain with stores that “were not typical of what existed in Canada at the time” with the “bright lights, lots of signs, specials, and remainder bins full of books at incredibly low prices.”<sup>10</sup> In the 1970s, the Cole brothers introduced a series of limited edition reprints of classic Canadian books at their venues. The pair sold Coles Books to Southam Press in 1978, although Jack Cole retained his role as the company’s president. In 1980, he opened the World’s Biggest Bookstore in a former bowling alley on Edward Street, which was described as “one of the original book superstores”, as well as the largest bookstore in the world with 67,000 square feet (6200m<sup>2</sup>) of retail space.<sup>11</sup>

Depicted in archival photographs (Images 20-22), the property at 720 Yonge Street remained a Coles Bookstore until the mid 1990s.<sup>12</sup> Since that time it has been occupied by a Shoppers Drug Mart, another iconic Canadian business founded by Torontonian Murray Koffler in 1962. The property at 720 Yonge Street with the Robert Barron Building (1889 and 1902) was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) in 1974.

### G. W. Gouinlock, Architect

The Robert Barron Building was completed in two stages in 1889 and 1902 according to the designs of Toronto architect George Wallace Gouinlock (1861-1932) and the successor firm of Gouinlock and Baker. Gouinlock apprenticed with architectural firms in Hamilton, Ontario and Winnipeg, Manitoba and worked in the United States before joining the Toronto partnership of Kennedy and Holland in 1886.<sup>13</sup> Three years later, Gouinlock opened a solo practice and attracted wide spread attention as the winner in 1895 of a design competition for the Temple Building, the North American headquarters of the Independent Order of Foresters (IOOF). Completed on Bay Street in 1897, it was distinguished as the tallest building in the British Empire.

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<sup>9</sup> The acquisition of the site in 1947 occurred during the planning of the Yonge Street subway, with construction starting in 1949 and the line opening in 1954 with stops at neighbouring Wellesley and Bloor Streets

<sup>10</sup> Kearney and Ray, <https://book.google.ca>, unpagged

<sup>11</sup> ibid

<sup>12</sup> Southam’s sold Coles in 1994, one year before it merged with SmithBooks (sic) as Chapters Incorporated (which was subsequently absorbed by Indigo Books as Chapters Indigo)

<sup>13</sup> During the three-year interval Gouinlock spent at the firm, Kennedy and Holland designed the Lakeview Hotel (now known as the Winchester Hotel) on Parliament Street, which is a designated heritage property and a local landmark in Cabbagetown

In 1901, Gouinlock embarked on a partnership with Francis Spence Baker (1867-1926), who had also trained in the office of Thomas Kennedy before gaining international experience.<sup>14</sup> After returning from England, where he was the first Canadian to be named a fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Baker designed high-end residential buildings in Rosedale and the Annex.<sup>15</sup> The firm of Gouinlock and Baker was best known for the Alexandra Apartments on University Avenue (completed in 1902 and demolished in 1955), which was an early and prominent purpose-built New York-style apartment complex in Toronto. Among the extant projects completed by the partners are the Toronto Lithographing Company Building (1901) at 461 King Street West and the 1902 addition to the Christie Brown and Company complex (now George Brown College) in the block bounded by King, George, Adelaide and Frederick Streets, which are designated heritage properties.

Returning to solo practice, Gouinlock designed some of the earliest and most prominent warehouses in the King-Spadina neighbourhood as it was transformed into Toronto's manufacturing district after the Great Fire of 1904, as well as the landmark Birkbeck Building (1910) on Adelaide Street East, which is the headquarters of the Ontario Heritage Trust as well as a National Historic Site. These projects were followed in 1906 by a prestigious appointment as the official architect to the Canadian National Exhibition Association after another disastrous fire left the exhibition grounds open for Gouinlock's reorganization. Gouinlock personally designed 15 new structures for the site, including the Press Building (1905), the earliest remaining building on the property, and the Government Building (1912, and popularly known as the Arts and Crafts Building), which is among a select collection of exhibition complexes designated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as National Historic Sites.

After World War I, Gouinlock received the commission for the Ontario Hydro-Electric Power Commission's headquarters at 610 University Avenue (now part of the Princess Margaret Hospital complex). His career continued until the early 1930s, with the library extension to the Ontario Legislature identified as one of his final works.

The Robert Barron Building at 720 Yonge Street was one of Gouinlock's first projects as a solo architect, which was included in a profile of the architect in Toronto Illustrated (1893), a book highlighting the "progress and prosperity" of the city.<sup>16</sup> He accepted subsequent commissions from Barron and his family, including the 1902 addition to the Yonge Street store and the 1912 stable complex on neighbouring St. Nicholas Street (Image 19).

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<sup>14</sup> The pair were located in the Temple Building, where Gouinlock also retained offices when he worked as a solo practitioner

<sup>15</sup> After his partnership with Gouinlock was dissolved, Baker specialized in bank buildings, including a Traders Bank branch at Yonge and College that he designed in association with the prolific New York City firm of Carrere and Hastings

<sup>16</sup> Extant buildings mentioned in the profile include the Philip Jamieson Store (1892) at 2 Queen Street West and the American Watch Case Warehouse (1893) at 511 King Street West, which are designated heritage properties



### iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Current photographs of the property at 720 Yonge Street are found on the cover and in Section 6 of this report. The Robert Barron Building, comprising the corner store and the complementary south extension, displays features of the popular architectural styles of the late Victorian era. The combination of the round-arched motif with the intricate brick detailing is associated with the Romanesque Revival style, which was popularized in the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by American architect Henry Hobbs Richardson. The latter's Alleghany County Courthouse (1884-88) in Pittsburgh inspired Toronto's second City Hall (completed 1899) along with other landmark buildings that included the Ontario Legislative Building (1886) at Queen's Park and the Confederation Life Building (1892) on Yonge Street. The style was adopted for commercial and residential buildings in the city, including the Robert Barron Building with its distinctive design.

As well as the influence of the Romanesque Revival, the Robert Barron Building also displays the distinctive oriel window associated with the Gothic Revival style of the same era. The influence of the Gothic Revival is shown more strongly in the illustration of the Robert Barron Building presented in The Canadian Grocer (Image 13), which depicts a dramatic monumental gabled pediment that may never have been constructed.<sup>17</sup>

The Robert Barron Building rises three stories beneath flat roofs with brick chimneys. Both the 1889 and 1902 units are clad with brick (currently painted) and feature brick, stone and wood detailing.<sup>18</sup> Although the pair are nearly identical in design, the older unit is distinguished by its chamfered northeast corner with the oriel window in the second storey. The principal (east) elevations on Yonge Street retain the cast iron columns on the first (ground) floor storefronts.<sup>19</sup> The upper stories are organized vertically by brick piers and horizontally by brick string and band courses. In the second floor, each unit displays a single monumental segmental-arched opening with brick mouldings that extend across the wall. The upper storey of each unit contains a trio of flat-headed window openings that are surmounted by blind arches incorporating decorative brickwork. The round-arched motif is repeated on the northeast corner where a single window opening with a blind arch is found in the third storey beneath the parapet with corbelled brickwork. This decorative detailing continues on the north wall overlooking Charles Street West, where the parapet steps down and the corbelled brickwork extends above the cornice line. On the north elevation in the second and third stories, flat-headed window openings are separated by a brick band course and display brick and stone trim. Some of the window openings on the east and north elevations

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<sup>17</sup> No archival evidence was found during the research and writing of this report showing this element, which is not evident in the 1938 photograph attached as Image 18

<sup>18</sup> McHugh (79) indicates that the building is also trimmed with terra cotta, typical of this era and style, but currently concealed by the paintwork

<sup>19</sup> Building records note that alterations during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century specifically retained the existing columns



contain wood sash windows. There are no openings on the portions of the south and rear (west) walls that are viewed above the adjoining buildings.

The rear (north) wings adjoining Charles Street West rise two stories, and the brick arches on the north elevations indicate where the 1889 stable was absorbed into the 1902 addition. The single-storey buildings to the south on Yonge Street are a later part of the complex, but have no distinguishing features.

#### iv. CONTEXT

The location of the property at 720 Yonge Street is shown on the map attached as Image 1. The Robert Barron Building anchors the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Charles Street West where it stands kitty-corner to former Postal Station F (1906), the designated heritage property at the northeast corner of the intersection. The single-storey buildings that form the south part of the complex at 720 Yonge (but are not considered heritage properties) separate the Robert Barron Building from a series of two-storey late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings placed mid-block between Charles Street West (north) and St. Mary Street (south). At the south end of this block, the International-styled office building (1956) at 10 St. Mary is included on the City of Toronto's heritage register. Within this block containing the Robert Barron Building and bounded by Yonge, Charles, St. Nicholas and St. Mary Streets, the property at 81 St. Nicholas (with the Robert Barron Stables) is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. While the criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto uses it when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property or X if it is applicable, with explanatory text below.

| <b>Design or Physical Value</b>  |            |
|--|------------|
| i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method | <b>X</b>   |
| ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit  | <b>X</b>   |
| iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement   | <b>N/A</b> |

**Well-crafted Example of a Style and Type** - The property at 720 Yonge Street has cultural heritage value for the design of the Robert Barron Building as a well-crafted example of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial edifice that displays elements of the popular styles of the era which were seamlessly applied to the complementary south extension. The Robert Barron Building is particularly distinguished by the round-arched motifs and

elaborate detailing associated with the Romanesque Revival style, as well as the chamfered northeast corner with the distinctive oriel window.

| <b>Historical or Associative Value</b>   |          |
|--|----------|
| i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community     | <b>X</b> |
| ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture                    | <b>X</b> |
| iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community | <b>X</b> |

**Person** – The Robert Barron Building has associative values for its continuous ownership for over a century by two successive companies. Following its completion in 1889 and expansion in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the building housed the grocery business of Robert Barron, whose company retained the property until 1947. The next year, Carl and Jack Cole, co-founders of Coles Books, acquired the site where they operated an inaugural retail store and launched the famous "Coles Notes" series of reference books.

**Community** - The associative value of the Robert Barron Building is also linked to its role in the historical development of Yonge Street as it evolved in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building contributed to the second generation of commercial storefronts that were identified by their height, narrow frontages and distinctive architectural detailing, particularly in the upper stories to reflect their prominence on the street. During this period, the unveiling of Toronto's first department stores near the Queen Street intersection changed the role of Yonge, leading to its revitalization as the city's new "main street" and resulting in the introduction of new storefronts, including the Robert Barron Building.

**Architect** - The property at 720 Yonge Street has value for its connection to the notable Toronto architect G. W. Gouinlock, who designed the 1889 building as one of his first projects as a solo architect and completed the 1902 south extension during his partnership with F. S. Baker. Although he accepted commissions for many of Toronto's landmark buildings, Gouinlock is recognized in particular for his work for the Canadian National Exhibition Association in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when he reorganized the exhibition grounds and designed a collection of exhibition buildings, including many that are designated as National Historic Sites.

| <b>Contextual Value</b>   |          |
|---|----------|
| i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area      | <b>X</b> |
| ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings | <b>X</b> |
| iii. landmark   | <b>X</b> |

**Character** – Contextually, the Robert Barron Building is valued for its contribution to the character of Yonge Street, south of Bloor Street West, which is typified by the surviving buildings, both individual and in groups that began the metamorphosis of

Yonge Street in the late 19th century as Toronto's main commercial corridor. The Robert Barron Building is an integral part of the blocks along Yonge north of College Street that include the Oddfellows' Hall (1892) at 450 Yonge, the Bank of Montreal Building (1887) at 496 Yonge, the Scottish Ontario and Manitoba Land Company Stores (1883) at 664-680 Yonge, the William Luke Buildings (1883) at 744 Yonge street, and the intact group of commercial buildings adjoining the Yonge and Wellesley intersection, all of which are included on the City's Heritage Register.

**Surroundings** – The contextual value of the Robert Barron Building is also related to its historical and visual links to its surroundings on Yonge Street where it is a prominent local feature with its chamfered corner, distinctive decorative detailing and corner location.

#### 4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 720 Yonge Street has design, associative and contextual values. Anchoring the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Charles Street West, the Robert Barron Building is a well-crafted example of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial building (1889) with a complementary south extension (1902) reflecting the popular architectural styles of the era. For nearly a century, the property was occupied by only two enterprises, with Robert Barron's grocery business followed by an inaugural Coles Books location. After Carl and Jack Cole acquired the site in the 1940s, they expanded the iconic retail chain and launched the famous “Coles Notes” series of reference books. Contextually, the Robert Barron Building is historically and visually linked to its setting on Yonge Street where it contributes to the historical character of the thoroughfare as it developed in the late 1800s as Toronto's “main street”.

#### 5. SOURCES

##### Archival Sources

Abstract Indices of Deeds, Park Lot 9 and Plan D3, Lots 1-5

Archival Photographs, City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Historical Board  
(individual citations in Section 6)

Assessment Rolls, City of Toronto, St. John's Ward, 1888-1892 and Ward 3, Division 3,  
1893-1907

Boulton, Atlas of Toronto, 1858

Browne, Map of York Township, 1851

Building Permits #35 (November 7, 1888) and #124 (December 4, 1901), City of Toronto  
Archives

Building Records, City of Toronto, Toronto and East York, 722-728 Yonge Street,  
1922 ff.

City of Toronto Directories, 1885 ff.

Goad's Atlases, 1880-1923

Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1964

## Secondary Sources

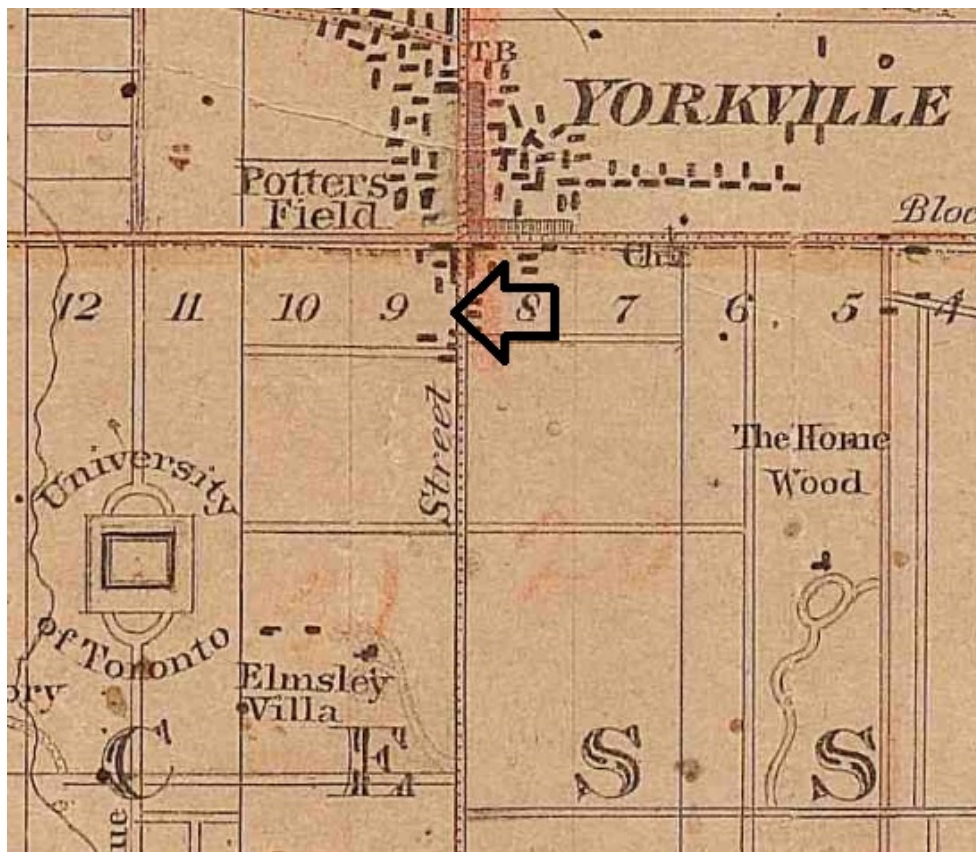
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- "Mr. Robert Barron, Dead", The Globe, March 26, 1912
- "Personal," Canadian Architect and Builder, 1899, Vol. 6, 115
- Toronto Illustrated 1893, reprint 1992

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1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of the property at 720 Yonge Street within the neighbourhood (above) and on the southwest corner of Yonge and Charles Streets (below)

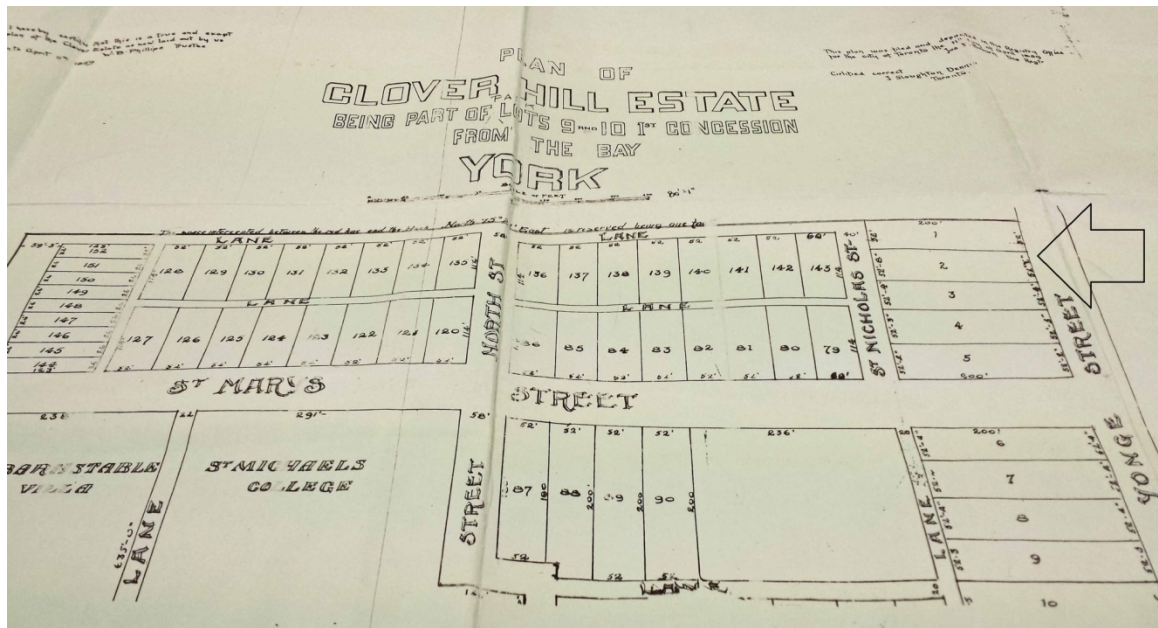
|           |                 |           |             |                |              |                 |                |                 |                     |                      |             |                |              |               |            |              |                      |                  |            |         |               |                   |                  |             |                |               |                |                |             |            |              |            |            |                  |     |               |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------|------------|---------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------------|-----|---------------|
| 5         | 35              | 34        | 33          | 32             | 31           | 30              | 29             | 28              | 27                  | 26                   | 25          | 24             | 23           | 22            | 21         | 20           | 19                   | 18               | 17         | 16      | 15            | 14                | 13               | 12          | 11             | 10            | 9              | 8              | 7           | 6          | 5            | 4          | 3          | 2                | 1   | 15            |
| Col Shank | Ms Eliz Johnson | Col Shank | Major Shank | Alex McDonnell | Mr. A. Burns | Mr. James Brock | Benj Hallowell | Angus McDonnell | Tom Ridout W. Allan | W. Hewitt Alex McNab | David Burns | Capn Bouchette | Capn A. Shaw | Capn S. Smith | Capn Shank | Capn Spencer | Lieu Col David Shank | E.B. Littlehales | Alex Grant | Q. Baby | Wm. Willcocks | Hon Peter Russell | Robert I.D. Gray | W.D. Powell | Thomas Raddish | Hon J Elmsley | James McCaulay | George Playter | John McGill | Wm. Jarvis | D. Wm. Smith | John White | John Small | Government Lease | Don | John Scadding |

2. Map of Park Lots: showing Park Lot 9 where the subject property was later developed (Lumsden, 10)

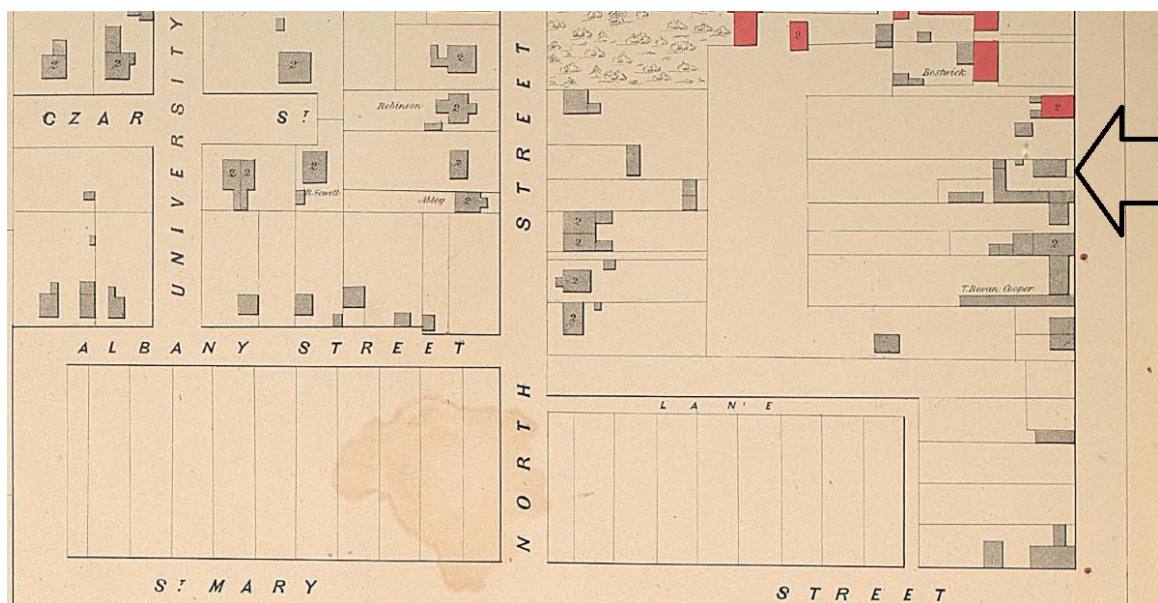


3. Browne's Map of York Township, 1851: showing the north portion of Park Lot 9 where the subject property was developed on land acquired by John Elmsley (whose family residence is illustrated to the south)



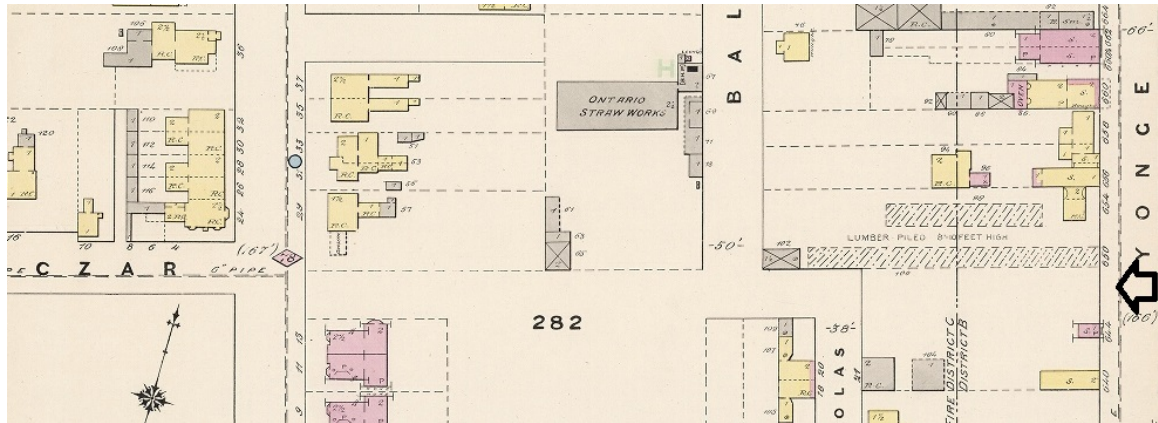


4. Plan D3: showing the subdivision of part of Elmsley's Cloverhill estate where the subject property was developed on Lot 2

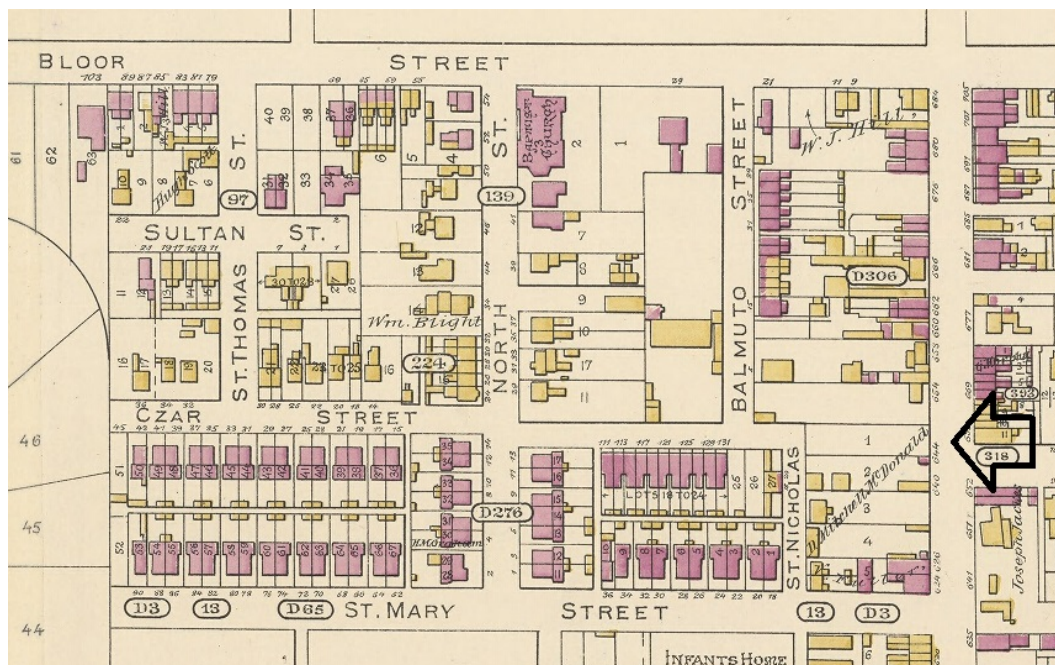


5. Boulton's Atlas, 1858: showing earlier buildings on the subject property before Czar Street (left) was extended eastward and later renamed Charles Street West

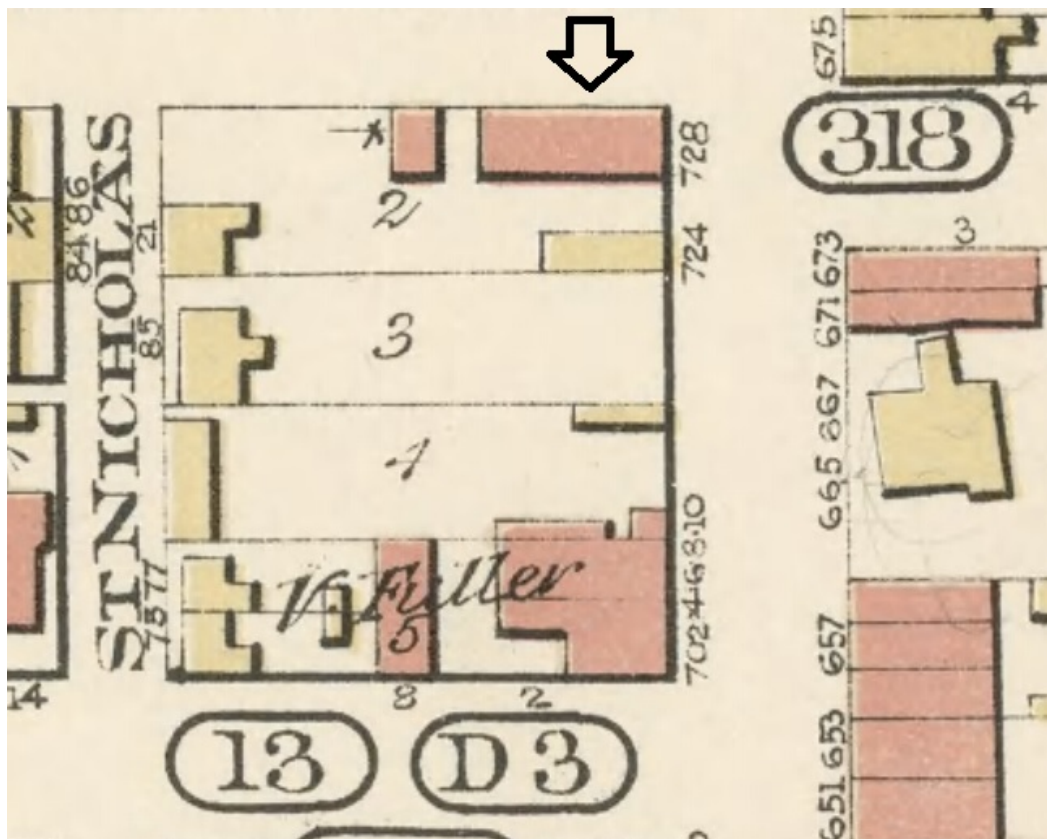
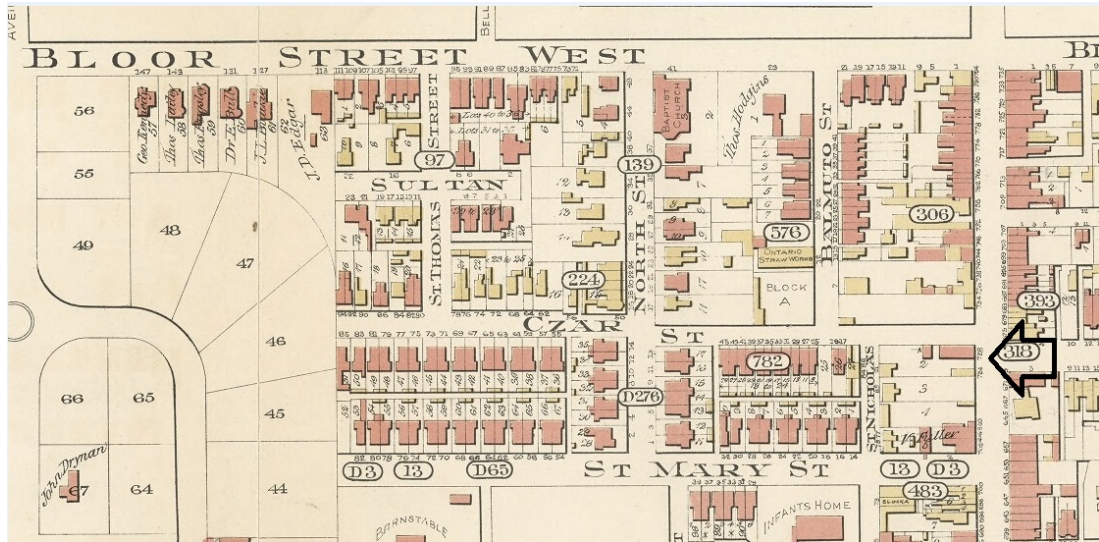




6. Goad's Atlas, 1880: the first Goad's shows the location of the subject property prior to the eastward extension of Czar Street (future Charles Street West) to Yonge Street

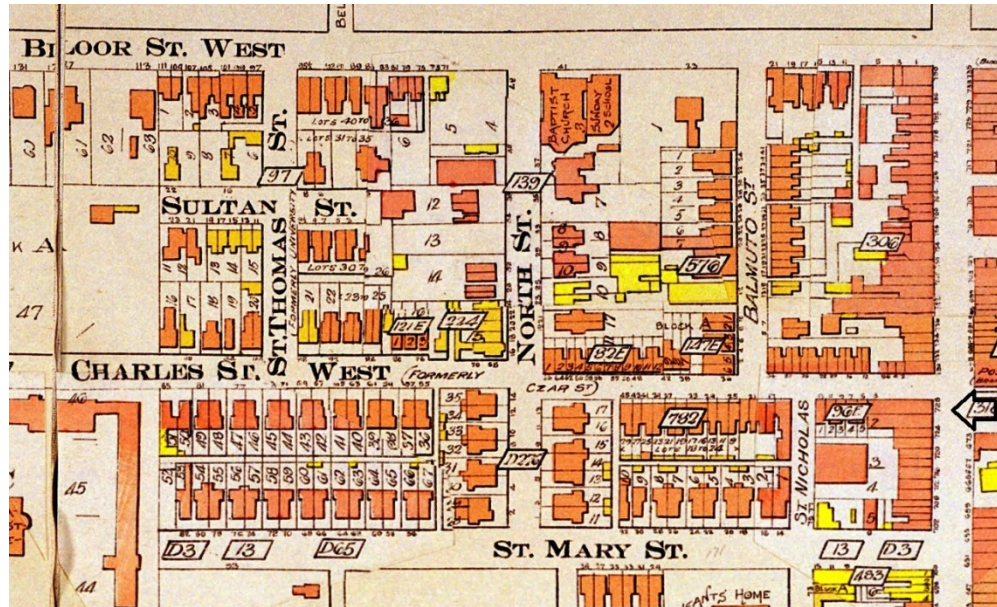


7. Goad's Atlas, 1884: the update to Goad's shows the alignment of Czar (Charles) Street prior to 1888 when the City of Toronto secured part of Lot 1 for the its extension to Yonge Street

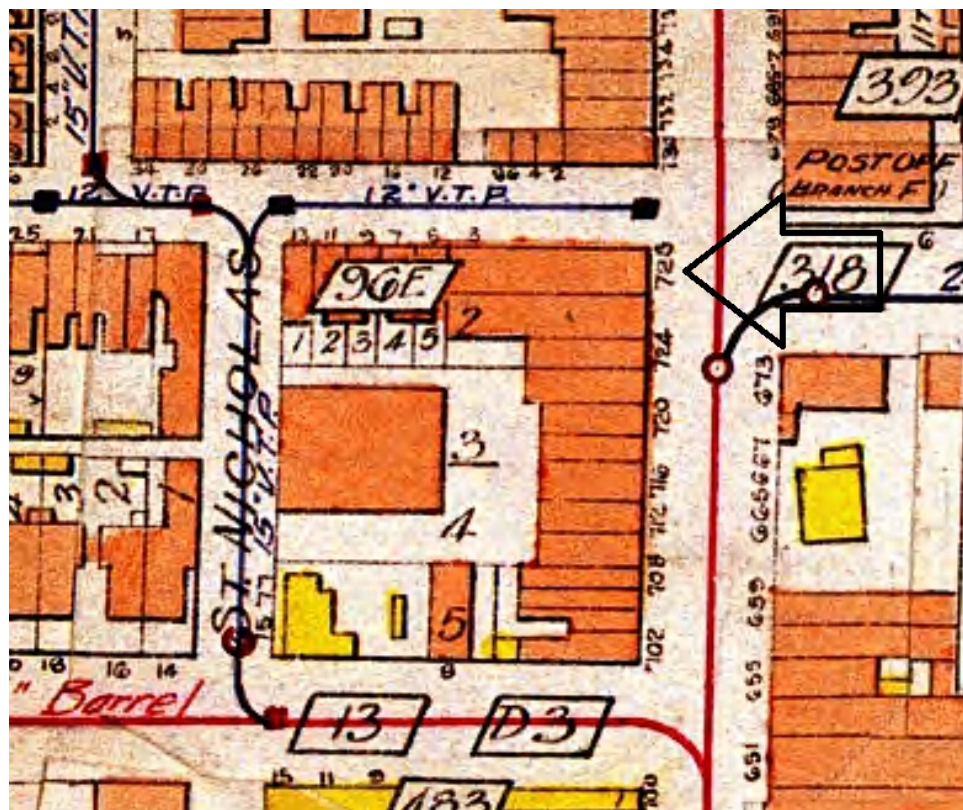


8. Goad's Atlas, 1890: the Robert Barron Building is shown in place with the detached stable to the rear (no further changes are shown on updates to Goad's in the late 19th century or in 1903)

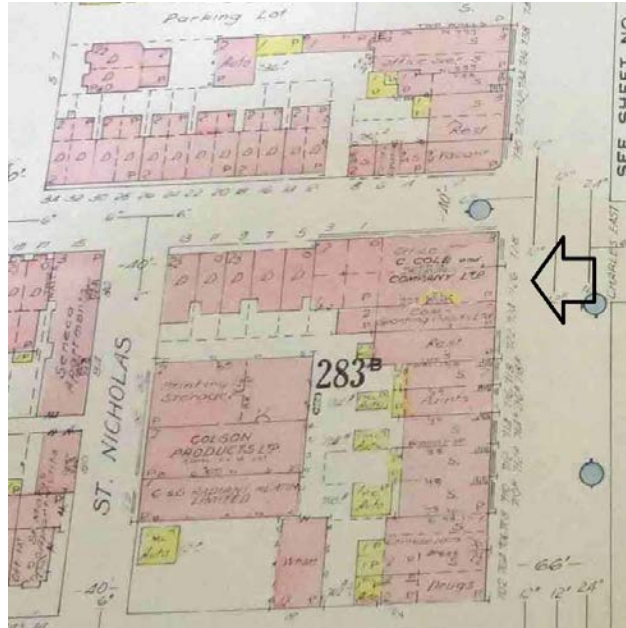




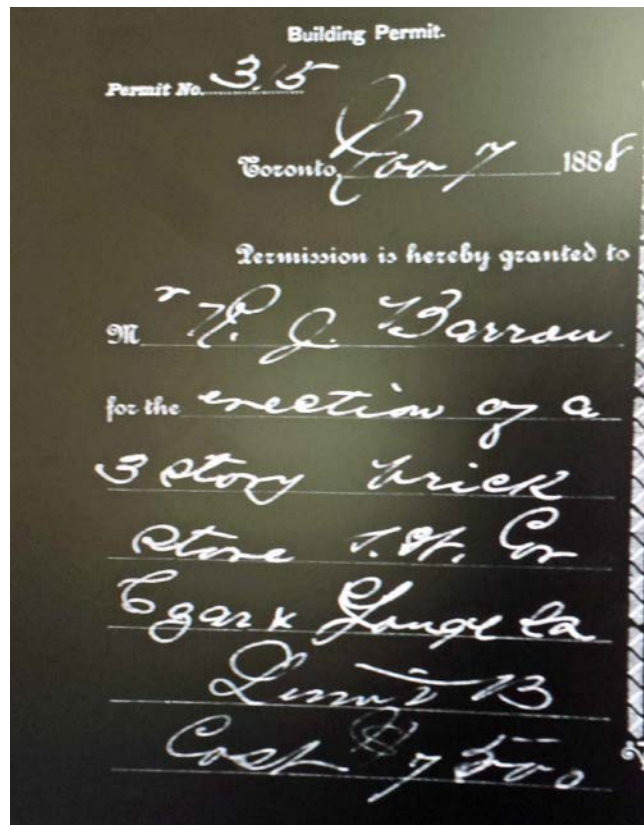
9. Goad's Atlas, 1912: the update shows the westward extension of the Robert Barron Building to encompass the original stable and the additional bays south on Yonge Street. The large brick building on St. Nicholas Street to the southwest was the company's new stable complex



10. Goad's Atlas, 1923: the last Goad's shows the changes described in Image 9

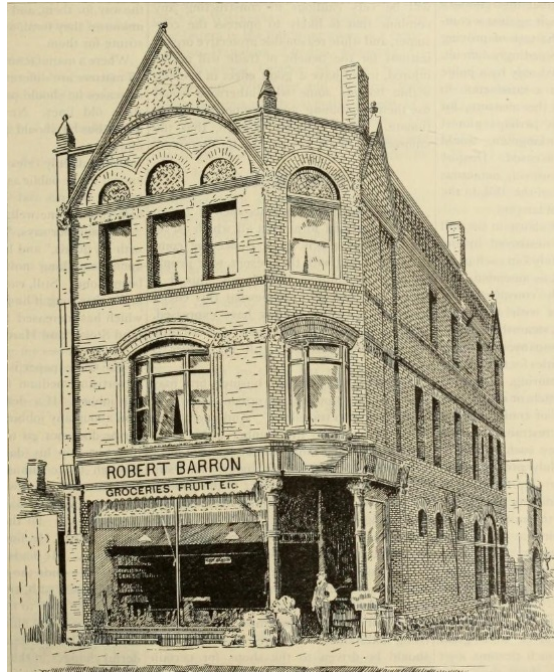


11. Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1964: showing the subject property when it was occupied by C. Cole and Company



12. Building Permit 35 (November 7, 1888): issued to Robert Barrow for a "3-storey brick store" on the subject property (City of Toronto Archives)





13. Illustration, The Canadian Grocer, May 10, 1889: showing the design for the north unit of the Robert Barron Building at the corner of Yonge Street and present-day Charles Street West  
<https://archive.org/stream/cangrocerjandec1889toro#page/224/mode/2up/search/Barron>



14. Archival Photograph, Robert Barron Building, 1898: showing the interior of the store (Board of Trade, 109)



15. Archival Photograph, Robert G. Barron, 1898 (Board of Trade, 109)

**BUILDING PERMIT.**

✓ No. 124

TORONTO, DEC - 4 1901

Permit granted to

Mr. Robt Barron  
 To erect a Alterations & additions  
to store B. rich

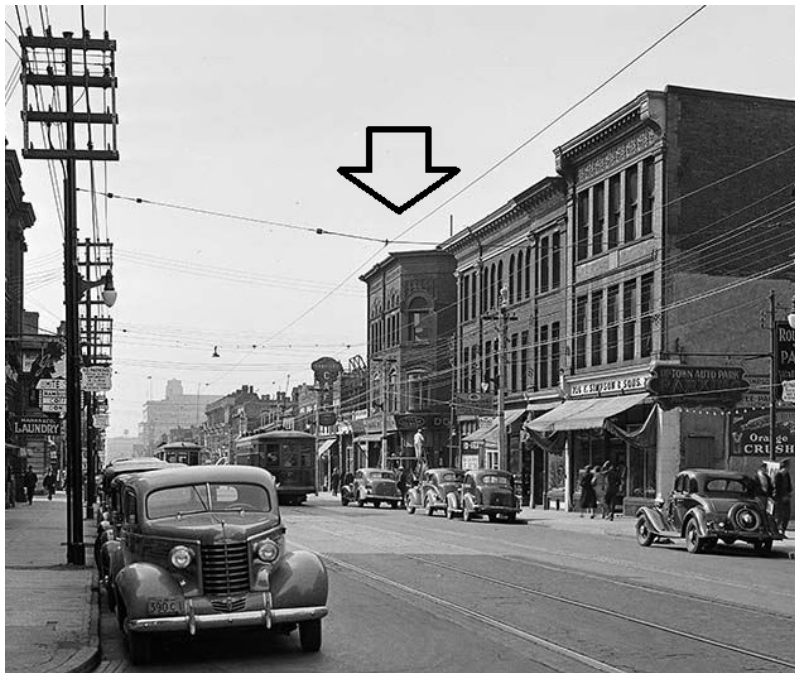
on cor Yonge & B. ar st.  
 Architect Gouinlock & Baker  
 Builder Davidson & Turner  
 Cost of Building, \$ 4000  
 Passed by Edw. G. G. G. G. Inspector  
 No. of Block Plan 172  
Trinit. B. Water Paid #172

16. Building Permit #124, December 4, 1901: issued for "alterations and additions" to the Robert Barron Building (including the southward extension on Yonge Street) with Gouinlock and Baker identified as the architects (City of Toronto Archives)



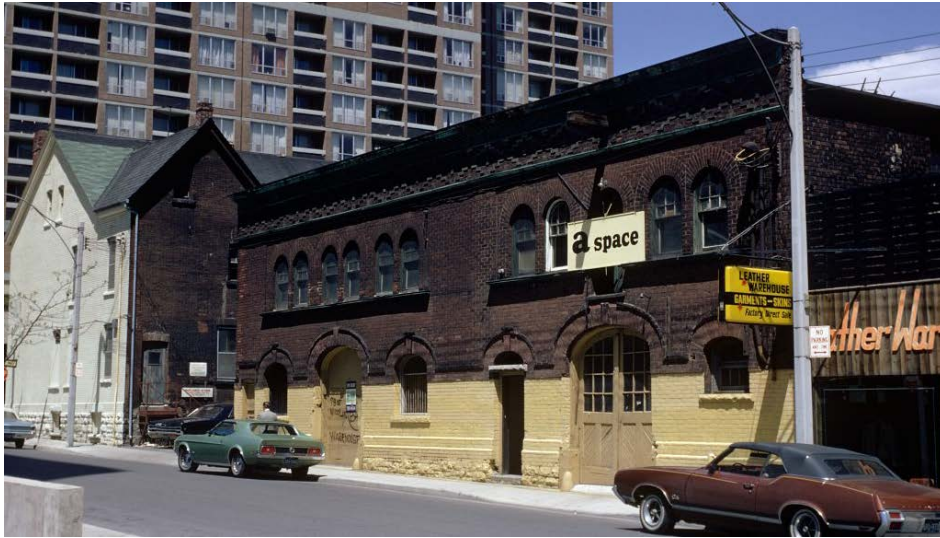


17. Archival Photograph, 726-728 Yonge Street, c. 1908: showing the lower stories of the Robert Barron Building, with the original portion marked "728" (right) and the complementary 1902 extension as "726" (left) (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1268, Item 967)



18. Archival Photograph, Yonge Street, south of Charles Street, 1938: showing the Robert Barron Building on the southwest corner of the intersection (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1231, Image 2028)





19. Archival Photograph, 81 St. Nicholas Street, 1971: showing the neighbouring Robert Barron Stable (1912), located southwest of the Robert Barron Building where it is a designated heritage property (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1526, Item 37)



20. Archival Photograph, 720 Yonge Street, 1974: showing the first three-storey section of the Robert Barron Building (1889) at the time the property was added to the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) (Toronto Historical Board)

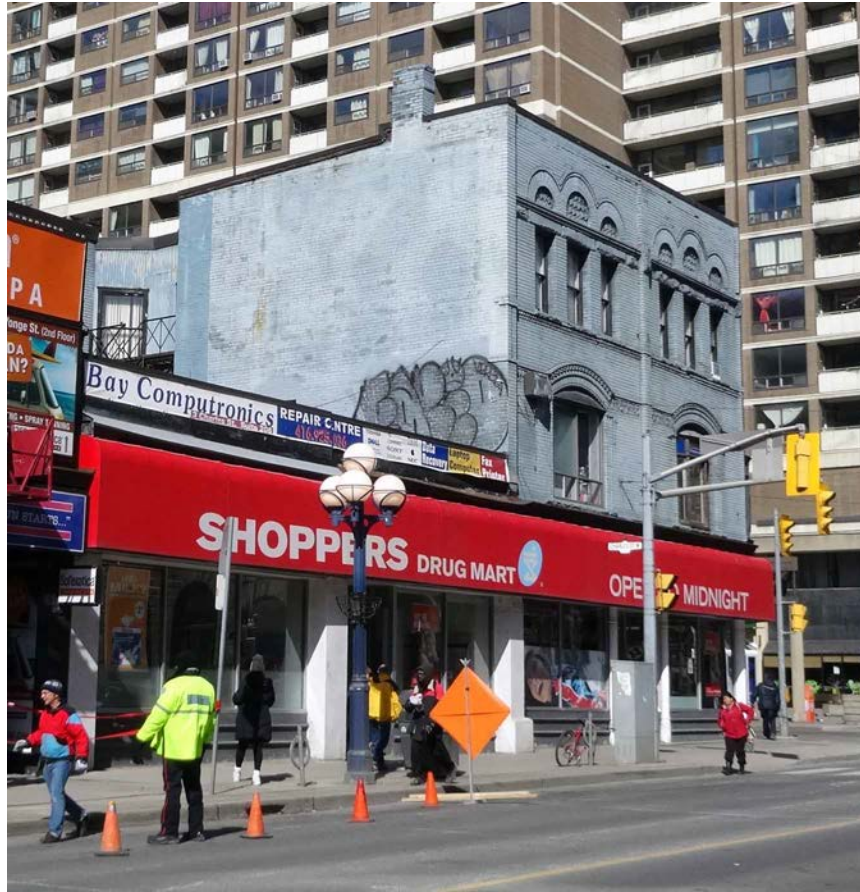


21. Archival Photograph, Yonge Street and Charles Street West, 1975: showing the subject property on the southwest corner of the intersection (City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1526, Item 5)

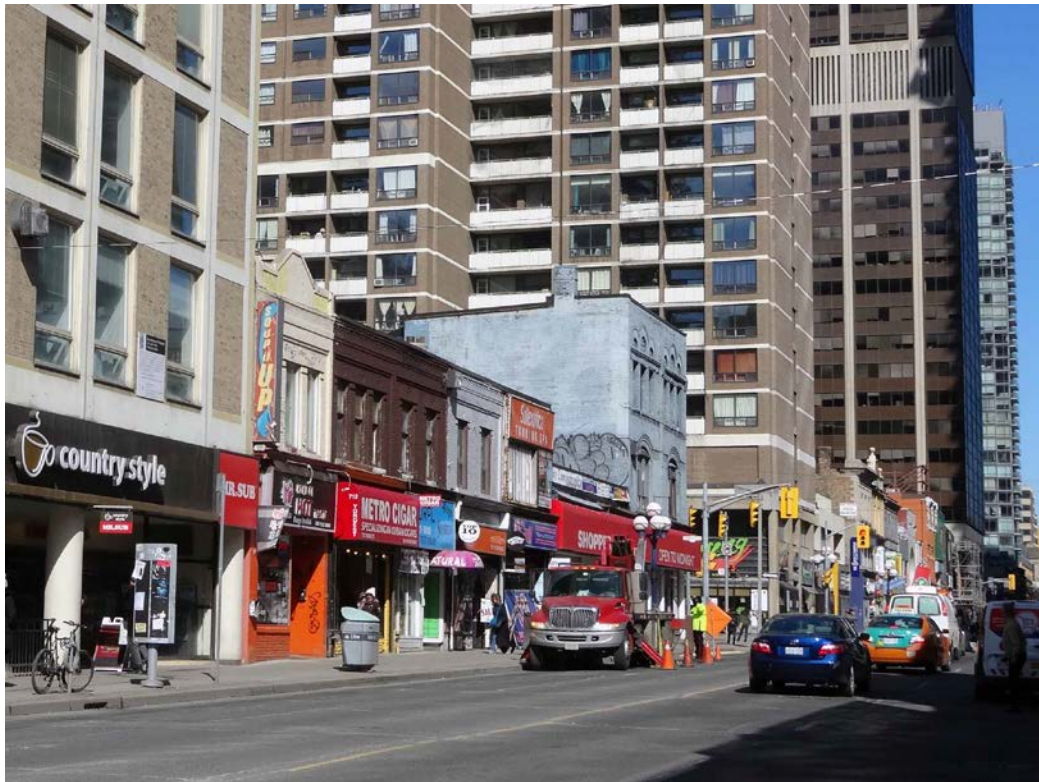


22. Archival Photograph, Robert Barron Building, 1991: showing the south (left) and east (right) elevations (Toronto Historical Board)





23. Current Photographs, 720 Yonge Street, 2015: showing the south elevation (above) and the north elevation on Charles Street West (below) (Heritage Preservation Services)



24. Current Photographs, 720 Yonge Street, 2015: showing the detailing on the northeast corner (top left) and the north roofline (top right) of the Robert Barron Building, as well as its location anchoring the southwest corner of Yonge and Charles Streets (below) (Heritage Preservation Services)